



ORD's Office of Science Policy Regional Science Program

Factsheet

EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) Regional Science Program links ORD's research program with EPA's regional offices. The Program, managed by ORD's Office of Science Policy (OSP), involves scientists from each EPA regional office—the 10 Regional Science Liaisons (RSLs) to ORD—as well as from EPA Headquarters. The Program emphasizes the building of networks and partnerships among regional and ORD scientists, and the generation and effective transfer of near- and long-term ORD research results on both intra- and inter-regional science issues.

The ORD Regional Science Program focuses on four key activities:

- Supporting regional participation in ORD research planning and Agency decision making.
- Facilitating the communication of ORD science to the regions.
- Managing the Regional Applied Research Effort (RARE) and Regional Methods (RM) Program.
- Planning and conducting Regional Science Topic Workshops.

ORD Research Planning

The RSLs support the Regional Research Coordination Team (RCT) representatives who provide regional input to the planning of the ORD research budget. In this capacity, the RSLs assist in the identification and presentation of high-priority, cross-regional research needs to the appropriate RCT; provide input to the planning of Progress Reviews and scientist-to-scientist meetings; and provide regional representatives for Science to Achieve Results (STAR) grant relevancy review teams.

Communicating ORD Science

The RSLs play an important role in communicating the results of ORD research to regional scientists and managers. They also are involved in other activities focused on transferring ORD science from the laboratories and centers to regions, states, and tribes. Some of these projects have included: (1) development of the Pesticides Information Management Pilot for the regions; (2) development of a training course in basic molecular biology concepts; and (3) coordination of cross-regional seminars on pharmaceuticals in the environment. The RSLs also sponsor science activities within their region's Science Council (e.g., ORD visits, guest lecture series, presentations by ORD scientists and STAR grant recipients, and training courses).

Regional Applied Research Effort (RARE) and Regional Methods (RM) Program

RARE is one of the mechanisms used by ORD to respond to the high-priority, near-term research needs of EPA's regional offices. Annually, ORD makes funds available to each EPA region to develop a research topic that is submitted to a specific ORD laboratory or center as an extramural research proposal. Joint participation by ORD researchers and regional staff throughout the process enhances communication and coordination between the Agency's research scientists and the users of that research in the EPA regional offices. In addition, the RM Program addresses environmental measurement problems identified by the regions as critical to their monitoring and enforcement activities. The RSLs facilitate the implementation of these programs in the regions, and they communicate the results of RARE and RM Program research to regional scientists and managers.

Regional Science Topic Workshops

OSP sponsors the Regional Science Topic Workshop series, which is intended to: (1) establish a better cross-Agency understanding of the science applicable to specific region-selected human health and/or ecological topics; and (2) develop a network of EPA scientists who will continue to exchange information on these science topics as the Agency moves forward in research, risk management, and education programs.

Each year, the regions select high-priority science issues for workshops. These workshops address the science issues of greatest importance to the regions on the selected topic area. Each workshop is planned and conducted by a team of regional, ORD, and other interested EPA scientists, led by a regional chairperson and facilitated by one or more of the RSLs. Participants maintain the cross-Agency science networks they establish at the workshops through planned post-workshop projects and activities, such as the identification of collaborative research opportunities; creation of information-sharing mechanisms, such as interactive Web sites; and development of science factsheets for regional use.

During the past 4 years, workshops have been held on asthma, communicating ORD science, the Fully Integrated Environmental Location Decision Support (FIELDS) system, nonindigenous species, pesticides, endocrine disruptors, emerging pathogens, aquatic life criteria, critical ecosystems, air toxics, and cumulative risk. Topics in the planning stage include environmental justice and tribal issues, emerging pollutants, and environmental indicators.

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